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## A Maverick Bids the House Farewell

*The following is adapted from Rep. Ron Paul's farewell speech on the House floor. The four-term Texas Republican, who lost in a bid to move up to the Senate this year, delivered his remarks on Sept. 19.*

Thousands of men and women have come and gone here in our country's history, and except for a few, most go unnoticed and remain nameless in the pages of history, as I am sure I will. The few who are remembered are those who were able to grab the reins of power and, for the most part, use that power to the detriment of the nation. We must remember achieving power is never the goal sought by a truly free society. Dissipation of power is the objective of those who love liberty.

The most I can hope for is that someday a suggestion I've made will be remembered: that the debate shift to a different plane. Instead of asking which form of intervention and planning government should impose, perhaps someday Congress will debate intervention vs. nonintervention, government vs. voluntary planning, U.S. sovereignty vs. internationalism—the pros and cons of true liberty. Today the debate basically is only that of deciding upon who will be the victims and who the beneficiaries.

Some have said my approach is not practical, but most concede, "At least he's consistent." Since I first came here in 1976, the number of lobbyists has doubled and the national debt has tripled—\$550 billion to \$1.59 trillion—to me a most impractical trend. Business cycles, unemployment, inflation, high interest rates and trade wars are the real impracticalities brought about by unwise political and economic policies. I've been impressed by those who concede to me the consistency of my views yet evidently reject them in favor of inconsistent views. Who, I might ask, is served by the politicians of inconsistency—the special interests or the general welfare?

Sadly, I have found that individual members, even though we represent our 500,000 constituents, are much less impor-

tant than most of us would like to believe. The elite few who control the strings of power are the only ones who really count in the legislative process. Votes, of course, occur routinely after heated debate by all those who want to ventilate. More often than not, the floor debates are a charade—a mere chance for grandstanding. Budgetary votes are meaningless in that continuing resolutions and supplemental appropriations are all that count. If covert aid to a nation is voted down, the CIA and the administration in power can find the means to finance whatever is desired. Emergencies are declared, finances are hidden, discretionary funds are found, foreign governments are used, and policy as desired is carried out regardless of the will of the people expressed by Congress.

On occasion, a program requested by the administration is "stopped" or voted down. But this doesn't really change the course of events—the "price" is merely raised. The vote can be reversed on the House floor or in the conference and the "enlightened" member who, casts the crucial vote, will receive an ample reward for his or her district. These arrangements or deals are routine and accepted practice. The better one is at making them, the higher one's "effectiveness" rating and the easier the next election.

The philosophy of the free market—sound money, private property and equal rights—offers the only real "compromise" to the impasse existing in Washington where only token attempts are made to cut the deficit. A truly practical approach to this dilemma can be immediately implemented. I suggest six points:

First, instead of debating forever whether or not cuts should be made in domestic welfare or military spending, the answer is simple: Cut both, and quit arguing—that is, if one is serious about declared hostility to massive deficits.

Second, all votes on spending should be trade-offs. Welfare to the poor vs. welfare

to the rich; aid to friends vs. aid to Communists; water projects in the U.S. vs. water projects in Africa; subsidized loans for steel plants in the U.S. vs. those in South America. Sure, many projects will still exist that are inconsistent with a truly free market but these would only be financed by dropping expenditures elsewhere.

Third, centralized planning fails everywhere else so we can expect it to fail with centralized control over bank credit. Sound money and breaking up the credit/bank cartel, will solve the problem of high interest rates and long-term financing.

Fourth, talks with the Soviets need not stop—only be redirected. But all subsidies to all Communists must end. We can discuss ways to enhance free trade and voluntary cultural exchanges. True friendly unsubsidized relations with even the apparent enemy go a long way toward reducing the chances of war. A nonaggressive, purely defensive foreign policy, which would prompt troop and missile withdrawals from Europe and elsewhere, would be much more important than all the political rhetoric heard surrounding disarmament conferences.

Fifth, equal rights must be guaranteed regardless of race, color or creed. Equal rights cannot, however, be defined vaguely to include demands on another's life or property. The goal of freedom must surpass our obsession with material wealth and its forced redistribution.

Sixth, prosperity with freedom for the individual is the only humanitarian system ever offered that prevented mass starvation and suffering. Refusal to accept the free market based on a natural rights philosophy is the most impractical thing we can do. A system that provides sound money, low interest rates, peace and prosperity will restore trust in the politicians, the money, the future and in ourselves.

More government cannot possibly offer the solution to the problems we face. Big government is the cause; freedom is the answer.